

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable consideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 4-22 are presently pending in this application, Claims 2 and 3 having been canceled, and Claim 1 having been amended and Claims 4-22 having been newly added by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Bagley et al. (U.S. Patent 5,259,190).

Claim 1 has been amended and Claims 4-22 have been newly added herein. These amendments and additions in the claims are believed to find clear support in the specification, claims and drawings as originally filed, and no new matter is believed to be added thereby. If, however, the Examiner disagrees, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned who will be happy to work in joint effort to derive a mutually agreeable claim language.

Before addressing the outstanding rejection based on the cited reference, a brief summary of Claim 1 as currently amended is believed to be helpful. Claim 1 is directed to an exhaust gas purification apparatus and recites: “a casing; a honeycomb-like filter accommodated in the casing and comprising a porous silicon carbide sinter carrying an exhaust gas purification catalyst, the honeycomb-like filter being configured to remove particulates in an exhaust gas; and a regeneration device configured to cause the honeycomb-like filter to be preheated with heat of the exhaust gas before regenerating the honeycomb-like filter.” By providing such a regenerating device, the heat from the exhausted gas evenly heats the filter, thereby preventing or reducing cracking in the filter, even if the filter is made of a porous silicon carbide.

Bagley et al. is directed to a heated cellular structure. Nevertheless, Bagley et al. does not teach or suggest “a regeneration device configured to cause the honeycomb-like filter to

be preheated with heat of the exhaust gas before regenerating the honeycomb-like filter” as recited in amended Claim 1. On the other hand, Bagley et al. describes that the electrodes 22-A to 22-F be provided at the inlet end face of the body 1 and that for early light-off application, the body 1 be heated to the ignition temperature of the exhaust gas by energizing the electrodes 22-A to 22-F, thereby igniting the exhaust gas and achieving the light-off temperature.¹ As such, it is believed that the electrodes 22-A to 22-F at the inlet end face of the body 1 create uneven thermal resistance in the body 1 and generate cracks in the body 1. Therefore, the structure recited in Claim 1 is clearly distinguishable from Bagley et al. and is not anticipated thereby. Furthermore, because Bagley et al. does not disclose the regenerating device as recited in amended Claim 1, its teachings would not render the structure recited in Claim 1 obvious.

Likewise, Claims 12 and 21 recite “a regeneration device configured to cause the filter to be preheated with heat of the exhaust gas before regenerating the filter” and “regenerating means for regenerating the filter by heating the filter, wherein the regenerating means preheats the filter with heat of the exhaust gas before regenerating the filter,” respectively, and thus Claims 12 and 21 are also believed to be distinguishable from Bagley et al.

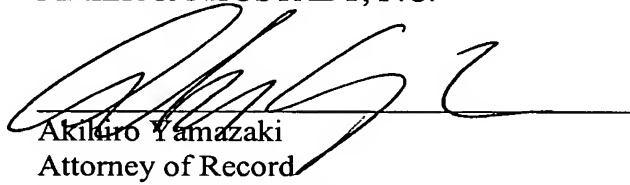
For the foregoing reasons, Claims 1, 12 and 21 are believed to be allowable. Furthermore, since Claims 4-11, 12-20 and 22 depend directly or indirectly from one of Claims 1, 12 and 21, substantially the same arguments set forth above also apply to these dependent claims. Hence, Claims 4-11, 12-20 and 22 are believed to be allowable as well.

¹ See Bagley et al., column 7, lines 19-66.

In view of the amendments and discussions presented above, Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in condition for allowance, and an early action favorable to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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